

bills to people who are insured. But Republicans have had a very valid point as well that there ought to be private options, that there ought to be choices, that you need to have a strong delivery system with American health care in the private sector. That is why I made mention of the emphasis in the children's health bill on the private sector options.

My message to the White House has been, and I think the distinguished Senator from Iowa has made the same point, that it will not be possible to go on to the broader issue of health care reform until first the urgent needs of our children, needs that are demonstrated every single day in communities across the land—we are not going to see efforts on the broader reform effort pay off until first the needs of our children are met.

I hope the White House will see that the prospects of getting into issues that they correctly identify as important—I have said for a long time, and I say to my colleagues again, every liberal economist with whom we have talked in the Finance Committee and the Budget Committee has made the point that the current Tax Code disproportionately on health care favors the most wealthy and encourages inefficiency.

If the children's health bill can get passed, and passed quickly, we can then go forward, Democrats and Republicans, to work together on it. I have a different approach than the White House has with respect to fixing the Tax Code on health care, but certainly there are ways that Democrats and Republicans can work together if there is the same kind of good faith, bipartisan effort we have seen with Democratic and Republican leaders on the CHIP legislation.

I hope the White House will not veto the CHIP bill. They want broader health care reform, and so do I. The fact is, Senator BENNETT of Utah and I, along with Senator GREGG, Senator ALEXANDER, and Senator BILL NELSON, have brought to the floor of the Senate the first bipartisan universal coverage health bill in more than 13 years. It has been more than a decade, I say to my colleagues, since there has been a bipartisan universal coverage bill.

The fact is, out on the Presidential campaign trail, a lot of the Democratic candidates for President and a lot of the Republican candidates for President are talking about some of the very same approaches I outlined when I proposed the Healthy Americans Act in December of 2006.

This is an important time for the future of health care in our country. I hope steps will be taken to meet the needs of our kids that are so urgent and the President will sign that legislation, that he will see the value of the important bipartisan work done in this Chamber. If he does, even though the clock is ticking down on this Congress—and there is not a lot of time left for major initiatives—I still be-

lieve, as do Senator BENNETT and the sponsors of the Healthy Americans Act, Democratic and Republican colleagues with whom we continue to talk, that it is possible to go forward after a good children's health bill is passed to have broader health reform. And I think colleagues understand how urgent that is.

One of the sponsors of our Healthy Americans Act, Senator GREGG, the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, just came into the Chamber. I am very honored to have him as a cosponsor of the Healthy Americans Act. Senators GREGG and CONRAD have correctly identified entitlement spending and the need to address it as a special priority.

The fact is, we cannot address the growing escalation in entitlement spending unless we deal with health care reform. We just cannot do it. It cannot happen because there are no costs rising in America like medical bills. Medical bills are a wrecking ball, flattening communities across the country and are the principal factor in the mushrooming cost of entitlements.

Again and again, the question of our country's well-being, the place of our companies in a tough global marketplace, the spiraling cost of entitlements comes down to the need to better address comprehensive health reform.

I believe, even though there is not a lot of time left in this session of Congress, that can be done, but only if, as Senator GRASSLEY noted early in the evening, the legislation that ensures that at least this session of Congress, at a minimum, takes steps to remove some of that moral taint we now face because our kids don't have health care. If that is done, we can go on from there.

I hope tomorrow we will see a resounding vote for the country's children. It is in their interests, it is in their name that we have had a bipartisan coalition working on the legislation. But I also suggest to the White House and others who want broader reform, reform that picks up on some of the White House's principles, it cannot happen unless the children's health bill is passed, and passed with a strong majority this week and the President signs it into law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I echo the words of the Senator from Oregon and thank him for his leadership on health care issues and especially his urging the President of the United States to sign the children's health insurance bill. We are hoping for a strong vote in the Senate tomorrow in passing that very important legislation.

#### HATE CRIMES

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise this evening in support of the Kennedy amendment, the hate crimes amend-

ment. Our Nation's strength lies in its diversity, its tolerance, its respect for the individual. Hate crimes borne of prejudice and ignorance, of fear and cowardice, contravene these core principles which our Nation for more than two centuries has held dear. They are perpetuated by individuals who fear, in some sense, individuality. Terrorism is a hate crime.

The amendment offered by my colleague, Mr. KENNEDY, ensures that hate crimes be investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. It enables Federal investigations of what are clearly Federal crimes. Hate crimes target individuals because they are part of a community. In the national community, all of us have a stake in fighting back against these crimes.

My colleague's amendment sends a strong message. The message is this: Our Nation will not turn the other way when individuals try to divide us. We will not tread softly when individuals use violence to perpetuate hatred. We will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law crimes that reflect a vicious disregard for individual rights and our Nation's core central values.

Our Nation is a community of people who care about one another. Hate crimes destroy our cohesiveness and our mutual respect and replace those values with paranoia, with divisiveness, and with destruction. Hate crimes weaken our Nation. This amendment strengthens it.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

#### FOREWARN ACT OF 2007

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in July, I introduced S. 1792, the FOREWARN Act of 2007, a direct outgrowth of legislation that one of my predecessors, two predecessors ago, Senator Metzenbaum from Ohio, introduced called the WARN Act, legislation he got through the Congress in the 1980s, but legislation that now needs an update. It is about plant closings and job loss.

Job loss, whether it is in Ohio or whether it is in Seattle, does not just affect a worker or a worker's family. Job loss devastates entire communities and local economies.

While notice of a layoff is no substitute for a job, the WARN Act of 20 years ago was supposed to give employees time to find a new job and for help to be provided. Under current law, however, fair notice has proven to be the exception, not the rule, because too many have gamed the old WARN Act.

Employers have laid off workers in phases to avoid the threshold level of the WARN Act, used subsidiaries to evade liability, and pressured workers in too many cases, in too many places around Ohio to waive their rights.

Whether one lives in Toledo, Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, Cincinnati, or Lebanon, it is absolutely critical that in these situations, workers and groups have sufficient notice to begin working to attempt to limit the damage this causes a community.